

**03-27-2009**

Dear SIC Members:

Welcome to **Volume 1, Issue 2** of *SIC Clips and Quips*. Here is the latest news for SICs:

- The SC-SIC Board of Trustees is proud to announce the selection of Morningside Middle School from the Charleston County School District located in North Charleston as the winner of the 2009 **Dick and Tunko Riley School Improvement Award!** All of the five finalists for the award presented excellent applications that detailed how the individual SICs brought their unique perspective and resources to their schools. Honorable Mentions were presented to:

**The Children's School at Sylvia Circle** – Rock Hill (Rock Hill Schools)

**Hunt Meadows Elementary School** – Easley (Anderson School District One)

**Mauldin High School** – Mauldin (Greenville County Schools)

**Round Top Elementary School** – Blythewood (Richland School District 2)

Visit the SC-SIC website <http://sic.sc.gov> to read more about the Riley Award winning schools and their accomplishments. You might get some good ideas for your own SIC!

- Carlos Primus and Delores Gilliard – a highly effective SIC parent and principal team from A. J. Lewis Greenview Elementary in Richland 1 – have been named the **SIC Advocates of the Year!** And Nell Stewart, longtime SC-SIC Board of Trustee member and advocate for children and public education is the recipient of the very first **Mover and Shaker** award. You can learn more about these extraordinary SIC volunteers on our website. Congratulations to Nell, Delores and Carlos!
- Your local **SIC Report to the Parents** must be made available to parents by **April 30**. And don't limit distribution of your report only to parents; print extras and put them in stores, laundromats, church bulletins, etc. Remember, this is your chance to tell the community about all the positive activities going on in your school. Not sure how to create your report? Visit the SIC website for tips and examples.
- The **school district flexibility legislation (H 3352)** is moving slowly through the General Assembly. The Senate Finance Committee is expected to have a third reading of their version of the bill next week and if it is approved by the full Senate, the new version will be sent to the House for approval. Since the House and Senate bills differ significantly, it is likely the bill will be sent to a conference committee – three Senators and three Representatives – who will be charged with developing a compromise bill that each body can sign off on. This bill provides temporary relief to school districts by giving them access to a menu of strategies to help them survive the current financial downturn. You may want to give your Senator a call and ask him to move the bill forward quickly. Districts are facing yet another funding cut and they are desperate for strategies to make the money they have left stretch through the end of the fiscal year. Visit [www.scstatehouse.net](http://www.scstatehouse.net) to read this bill and learn more about your state government.
- Enormous controversy surrounds the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)** also known as the federal stimulus. Governor Mark Sanford has vowed to reject \$700 million in

stimulus funds the federal government plans to inject into the economy that is intended to support public education, Medicaid, unemployment benefits, roads and more. The Governor contends that the stimulus plan adds too much debt to the state and he wants to use the dollars to reduce state debt – or return the money to the federal government. According to an article in *The State*, some state leaders – including Senate Finance Committee Chair Hugh Leatherman – argue that refusing the ARRA money will result in teacher layoffs, prison closures and could virtually eliminate some state agency budgets. Read more about it at <http://www.thestate.com/local/story/728784.html>. What do you think? [Contact Governor Sanford and your representatives in the House and Senate](#) and tell them the action you want them to take as your elected representatives.

- **What does “school choice” mean to you?** Dueling legislation has been introduced on both sides of the aisle and debate is likely to be hotly contested. Senator Robert Ford has introduced the “South Carolina Opportunity Act” (**S 520 & H 3802**), a bill that revisits the Put Parents in Charge Act that was defeated a few years ago. It would provide tax credits to parents who send their children to private school or home school. Supporters say the bill could give children attending “failing” public schools new options. Detractors say that giving tax credits for private school would take away money from public schools that is needed more now than ever. In addition, very few families in South Carolina have enough state tax liability to make much of a dent in the cost of private school tuition, so this bill would be of little or no benefit to the poor. State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex supports *public school choice* and legislators have introduced the “Public School Choice Program Act” (**S 607 & H 3737**) this week. Dr. Rex’s plan would require at least one new in-district choice option at the elementary, middle and high levels within the school district and would encourage across-district choice options as well. The Ford bill will be discussed in a Senate committee next week. We’ll share more information about these bills in future issues but in the meantime, you can visit [www.scstatehouse.net](http://www.scstatehouse.net) to read the bills for yourself.
- **Funding for SC-SIC**, like other EIA programs, has been slashed to the bone and another cut is expected very soon. For this reason, the next issue of **Council News** will be the last one mailed for this school year. Please keep checking our website for the latest news and watch for additional issues of **Clips and Quips** to stay informed.
- Interested in **Leadership & Advocacy training** this spring? Learn how to be a more effective SIC member and advocate for public education. The SC-SIC staff can provide this free training in collaboration with your district office.

*We hope you find this information useful. Please share this information with SIC members who have not provided an email address to our office and also with others in your community involved in public education. We are here to help you, so please contact us any time!*